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In efforts to present a stronger public image to possible funding sources, the student personnel staffs of community colleges ir Maryland established an ad hoc committee to assess the services being offered students by the various college counseling centers (12). It was hoped that evaluation of current guidance programs would enable the different schools to learn from each other, and strengthen their weaknesses. Goals of the committee were to establish a task force to write guidelines for student personnel work, and to set up an evaluation group to study, through opinionnaires, the services and practices available. A modified version of the Raines--Carnegie Study of Junior College Student Personnel Services was administered to about 100 students and all full-time faculty and student personnel workers at each college. A visiting team discussed results of the questionnaires with each campus group in hopes of identifying good and bad practices. While little questionnaire data is available as yet, it is apparent that the campus centers are taking a critical look at their own procedures. Generally, Maryland seems to be weak in placement and health services, with full-time students particularly aware and critical of the services. (Author/CJ)

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DO WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?--NEW DIRECTIONS IN EVALUATION

Presented at the 1969 APGA Convention, Session # 173

More than two years ago, it was recognized by the student personnel workers in the community colleges of Maryland and by members of the pupil personnel staff of the State Department of Education that some of the money available to the State of Maryland from the Federal National Defense Act, Title V-A, should be reaching the community colleges for the improvement of counseling services to students. At an early meeting, called by the Department of Education and attended by representatives of the student personnel staff of each public community college in the State, it became clear that the total sum of money available to community colleges might be best utilized if it were used in some joint effort by all the colleges rather than dividing it among 12 colleges. However, the press of time and a lack of consensus as to how the pooled money might best be spent in a way that would bring equal benefit to all community college students made a combined project impossible that fiscal year. But the group did not disband without a committment to try again the following year to find a way to design and carry-out a combined project. The actual sum of money available to each college amounted to $2,000.00 -- really not enough money to have a significant impact on a program of student personnel services at today's prices, but $24,000.00, wisely spent, could have a real effect on the programs in the State if it "zeroed-in" on the real trouble spots in existing programs.

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Now we did, and still do, have a large collection of common problems. Such things a remedial instruction, public information for students and prospective students (and indeed other groups we wanted to hear the community college story), research on student characteristics, a model testing program, evaluation of existing services, a set of guidelines for services, the list could go on if my memory were better--or if those earlier meetings were not what they were--as all early attempts at cooperation are--confusing! While all of us saw the value of cooperation, each of us had our own pet idea, each of the colleges somewhat different in state of development, each college had some unique problems, even the different personalities of the members of the ad hoc group had some effect. (Just in case you have missed it in your own observations, student personnel workers are not a agreeable group--in fact in our area we seem to have a corner on divergency.) Some colleges had, they believed, the final message or idea that could use all the money, and therefore some other places believing they could not borrow the idea because their college was too different, could not accept this idea. But you have been through this yourself, I am sure. How did we manage to settle on a scheme of state-wide evaluation? It's a curious, tortuous path from here to there and I will try to recount as best I can!

One idea that had rather strong and early support (in particular from the college presidents, public reaction and vocational program

staff) was a campaign of public information about community colleges aimed at students in the junior and senior high schools, the local businessmen, and county political leaders. Maryland community colleges are relatively new--most founded within the last 12 years and could use some good public exposure. State support has not been the best and more money from both State and the counties would be most welcome. We thought we finally had a good common idea--one that would improve the educational opportunity for students in the community college by making opportunities already available known to the student and possibly increasing opportunity for expanded offerings through better state and local tax support. It looked like we were moving. The presidents were consulted, they agreed, the State Department saw merit in the project, but there was still rough water ahead.

Unless you know what you want to say about community colleges--a state-wide public information campaign is difficult to get off of the ground. Well no one was sure which aspects of the community colleges in the State needed public exposure--and besides "publicity" or selling never seems to appeal too strongly to student personnel people. Since no one had "the meassage" gears were shifted to the idea of a state-wide workshop of student personnel workers from all the public community colleges out of which should grow:

1. some common ideas about community colleges in our State, from which a public information program might evolve
2. a look at our personnel programs in a critical way

3. some plans for improvement in the future

Agreement was received from the State Department of Education, the Presidents and the various student personnel workers at the colleges. A planning group of representatives from each college was formed and a smaller executive committee was created to select a director for the conference and do the planning for final appraisal by the total committee.

Dr. Alice Thurston was engaged by the chairman as Conference Director, Dr. Jane Matson as program co-ordinator. Speaker or group leaders for the conference included Dr. Edmund Glazer, Dr. Max Raines, Dr. Dorothy Knoell, Dr. Terry O'Banion, Dr. Jack Sorrells, Dr. Lynn Orth and Dr. Mattenbarger.

The reason for mentioning these people is, in one sense, obvious as they represent leaders in our field and having an opportunity to be with them for four days is valuable in itself. A less obvious reason is that many of them were to return to Maryland in March for two days evaluation visits--and this is really the essence of the evaluation project. The four day conference with practically all of the junior college personnel workers (and a few deans and presidents in the State) meeting with leaders in our field, led to a series of two-day, self-evaluation visits to each of 11 State Community Colleges. Each visit followed the administration of a modified version of the opinion instrument used by Dr. Raines in the Carnegie Study of Community College Student Personnel Programs to groups of students, faculty, administrators and student personnel workers.

There was considerable debate at Williamsburg about the "real" value of any program of evaluation for many reasons--the two strongest sentiments were:

1. no good instrument for evaluating services exists
2. the time and money involved would be better spent on programs of action--in particular on a model or pilot project of a student development nature

But the orginal reasons for the conference seemed to call for follow-up of the state-wide evaluation and sharing of this information, so two clear resolutions resulted in spite of some objections. Two committees were created:

1. Task Force One - to write guidelines for student personnel work.
2. Evaluation Group - to study through opinion survey the services and practices currently being offered.

I have included all this preliminary information to help you understand that the evaluation has had wide, general involvement of student personnel workers sine it was first suggested--and that's an important fact because it seems clear now that the process of evaluation is more important and more valuable than the data collected. I will concentrate on the process and say very little about the results of the opinion surveys.

Once evaluation was to be done it was necessary to choose or devise an instrument. Part of the lead-up to the Williamsburg Conference had already included the use of a modified form of the

instrument that was used in the Raines - Carnegie Studey of Junior College Student Personnel Services. While little was done with the summary information at Williamsburg, it did set the stage for the further use of the opinionnaire as a device for tying the evaluation visits together. Each college agreed to give the questionnaire to about 100 students, all full-time faculty, all administrators and all student personnel workers. An index (on a 4 point scale) was developed for each item (38 in all). Each group's response was summarized and listed with the other three groups so that the following could be done:

1. items marked cannot judge by 1/3 were set aside
2. items marked below 2.0 were identified
3. items marked above 3.0 were identified
4. inconsistent judgement identified topics for group discussions

The visiting team was asked to concentrate their discussion with various groups marked good, poor, or judged inconsistently, but the teams were not bound to this system and each visit had its own characteristic pattern determined in part by the personality of the consultant and team members and what the groups wanted to talk about.

The hope was that good practices could be indentified for sharing with others and poor practices could be called to the attention of that college by the team--hopefully would be observed from the summary of the opinion index sheets. Since the 12 college visits were all scheduled for the middle of this past March, I have little data

on the reports from the teams, but I can share information of a very general nature about how the visits were arranged and what value the process itself has seemed to have.

All of the events following the Williamsburg Conference have been organized and executed by the Maryland Association of Junior Colleges--Student Personnel Division which is a group that has no full-time officers. All of us serve because we are interested in sharing or helpin somehow with our common problems. Projects, of the scope that we have attempted, have pulled us together into a useful organization.

Williamsburg got us together for four days of good discussions with leaders in our field - National and State-wide.

Two clear projects for the total group developed out of the Conference:

1. Evaluation by a team from one college visiting another college along with a consultant chosen by the college to visited from among the consultants present at Williamsburg
2. Create "Task Force One" to write a basic set of guidelines for student personnel work that could set some patterns for the future.

EFFECTS OF THE PROCESS - USE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The use of a printed (even the physical appearance of the opinion instrument seemed to have a positive effect) questionnaire started conversations going on each campus among students, faculty and administrators about why the project was being done. Provided a good chance to share information about attitudes and opinions on each campus.

Tabulation of results on each campus at least allowed for some judgement about what services are well done or poorly done or are seen differently by various groups.

Team visits were useful to both the team and college visited. Again the process of discussion by the visiting team with the student groups, faculty and administrative groups and usually a rather lengthy discussion with student personnel staff usually helped to focus on the effect of the program on the students who were being served.

Each visiting team left a written report of its opinion of the college's program and the experience of the visiting team (composed of collegues remember) has the same kind of effect as serving on an accrediting team does. It is usually of more value to the team than to the college. I am sure many good practices will be transplanted from one campusto another by the process of the system of cross-evaluation.

Just how the data from the modified questionnaire will be summarized is not finally determined, but I do know that each college's data will be published blind, and that student, faculty, and administrative responses will be tallied on a state-wide basis.

Whether any grand conclusions will be drawn is doubtful, but the expected differences among new, middle-aged, and older colleges are already obvious--young institutions get good "grades" from the students probably because everybody is pioneering--older institutions

have complex systems that are better known by the staff than by the students.

Full-time students are more aware of services and more critical. Part-time students are less aware of services, but seem to expect and even desire to be left alone.

In general, we in Maryland seem to be very poor in getting our students involved in community service activities--as seen by everyone who answered the questionnaire. We are weak in placement services and health services and will probably have a problem with student housing in the near future because the students see it as a weakness and we believe we have no concern in this area because we are a community college.

Do we make a difference--this program will never tell but it has brought us together and to a point where we now can ask are we assisting with student development--we know some of the standard services will not alone make up a real program of student development.

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